

Message Text

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21/44

ACTION H-01

INFO OCT-01 SS-14 ISO-00 NEA-06 NSC-05 NSCE-00 EUR-08 /035 W

----- 041935

R 281245Z MAR 75

FM AMEMBASSY BEIRUT

TO SECSTATE WASHDC 3622

INFO AMEMBASSY CAIRO

AMEMBASSY DAMASCUS

AMEMBASSY AMMAN

AMEMBASSY TEL AVIV

AMEMBASSY MOSCOW

C O N F I D E N T I A L SECTION 1 OF 2 BEIRUT 4009

LIMDIS

C O R R E C T E D C O P Y (.CORRECT TO ADD LAST LINE IN TEXT
PREVIOUSLY OMITTED)

EO 11652: GDS

TAGS: PFOR, LE, IS, US, XF, USSR

SUBJECT: MCGOVERN'S MEETING WITH LEBANESE FOREIGN MINISTER

1. SENATOR MCGOVERN MET YESTERDAY MORNING FOR 60 MINUTES
WITH FON MIN TAQLA, WHO RETURNED THE NIGHT BEFORE
FROM ARAB LEAGUE FOREIGN MINISTERS MEETING, CAIRO.
TAQLA INDICATED THAT NO REPEAT NO SUBSTANTIVE BUSINESS
WAS DONE AT THE FOREIGN MINISTERS MEETING DUE TO RELIGIOUS
HOLIDAYS AND FEISAL'S TRAGIC DEMISE.

2. SENATOR OPENED SUBSTANTIVE CONVERSATION BY ASKING
TAQLA'S VIEWS ON WHERE WE GO FROM HERE AND ALSO
TAQLA'S ASSESSMENT OF THE OPPORTUNITIES FOR A PEACEFUL
SETTLEMENT OF THE MIDDLE EASTERN PROBLEMS. TAQLA
SAID HE WOULD BE GLAD TO SHARE WITH THE SENATOR
HIS "PERSONAL" VIEWS. HE EMPHASIZED THAT THE GOL
HAS NOT REPEAT NOT YET HAD A CHANCE TO STUDY THE
FAILURE OF THE SECREARY'S MISSION AND ESTABLISH A
POLICY WITH REGARD TO FUTURE DEVELOPMENTS. HE ALSO
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MADE CLEAR THAT THE GOL'S VIEWS ON THE FUTURE WERE

OBVIOUSLY OF SECONDARY INTEREST AND THAT THE GOL'S
ROLE WAS DEFINITELY LIMITED. NEVERTHELESS, THE
FUTURE OF THIS PART OF THE WORLD WAS OF PRIMORDIAL
IMPORTANCE TO HIS GOVERNMENT.

3. TAQLA SEES A MOVE TO GENEVA AS INEVITABLE. SUCH
ACTION, HOWEVER, HE IS CONVINCED WILL NOT IN ITSELF
LEAD TO PEACE UNLESS THE U.S. AND THE SOVIET UNION
CAN COME TO AN UNDERSTANDING ON TWO BASIC PROBLEMS.
THE FIRST IS, OF COURSE, AN OVERALL CONSENSUS BETWEEN
THE SUPERPOWERS AS TO THE OUTCOME THEY WILL BE SEEKING
IN GENEVA AND THEIR ABILITY TO "FORCE" THIS CON-
SENSUS ON THEIR FREINDS IN THE AREA. AS AN INTEGRAL
PART OF SUCH A CONSENSUS, THERE IS THE SECOND MAJOR
PROBLEM, I.E. THE ROLE OF THE PLO IN ANY FUTURE
NEGOTIATIONS AND THE NECESSITY TO ACCEPT
AND DEAL WITH THE PLO AS A KEY ELEMENT TO A SOLUTION. TAQLA
REPEATEDLY DURING THE CONVERSATION CAME BACK TO
THE NECESSITY FOR SUCH AN UNDERSTANDING IN THE
ABSENCE OF WHICH THERE WOULD BE ABSOLUTELY NO
REPEAT NO POSSIBILITY OF ACHIEVING A PEACEFUL
SOLUTION.

4. TAQLA OF COURSE APPRECIATES THE DIFFICULTY OF
ARRIVING AT SUCH AN UNDERSTANDING AND IS THEREFORE
BASICALLY PESSIMISTIC WITH REGARD TO THE IMMEDIATE
FUTURE OF THE MIDDLE EAST. WHILE HE WAS NOT SPECIFIC
IN SO STATING, IT WAS OBVIOUS THAT TAQLA FEARS
ANOTHER WAR IN THE AREA. SUCH AN EVENTUALITY WOULD
BE A DISASTEER. NOT ONLY WOULD IT GAVE A FIELD DAY
FOR SOVIET PROPAGANDA AMONG THE ARABS, BUT ALSO WOULD
PLACE THE UNITED STATES AND THE WEST IN GENERAL
IN AN EXTREMELY DIFFICULT POSITION VIS-A-VIS ALL
THE ARAB COUNTRIES AND EVEN SOME OF THEIR FRIENDS.

5. ANOTHER WAR, TAQLA IS CONVINCED, WOULD PRODUCE
NOTHING. AFTER BLOODSHED, EXPENDITURE OF RESOURCES
AND POLITICAL-ECONOMIC DISTRUBANCES, THE MIDDLE
EAST ONCE AGAIN WOULD FIND ITSELF IN THE SAME POSITION
AND NOTHING WOULD BE SOLVED BY HOSTILITIES. TAQLA
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ACCORDINGLY IS CONVINCED THAT EVERY EFFORT MUST BE
MADE PRIOR REPEAT PRIOR TO GENEVA TO COME TO A
BASIC UNDERSTANDING.

6. IN DISCUSSING THE DANGERS OF THE MIDDLE EAST,
TAQLA WAS VERY FRANK ON HIS VIEWS OF THE SOVIET ROLE.
THE SOVIET UNION, HE SAID, AS OF THE MOMENT IS
CONSIDERED THE FRIEND OF THE ARABS. A VAST MAJORITY OF ARABS

ARE CONVINCED THAT THE SOVIET UNION IS ACTING ON THEIR
BEHALF AND AS TENSIONS RISE ALL ARABS WILL EASILY
BE CONVINCED THAT THE UNITED STATES IS THE REAL
ENEMY OF THE ARAB WORLD. TAQLA BELIEVES THIS WOULD
BE DISASTRUS AND EVERYTHING MUST BE DONE TO AVOID
GIVING THE SOVIET UNION THIS GOLDEN OPPORTUNITY.
ON THE OTHER HAND, TAQLA WARNED THE SENATOR THAT WE
SHOULD BE AWARE OF THE POSSIBILITY THAT ISRAEL, IF IT
DOES NOT FIND WHAT IT CONSIDERS TO BE SECURITY
IN THE AMERICAN GUARANTEE, WOULD READILY TURN TO THE
SOVIET UNION. HE DESCRIBED AT SOME LENGTH THE
ISRAELIS AS BASICALLY ORIENTAL PEOPLE, BE THEY OF
MIDDLE EAST DESCENT OR BE THEY OF EUROPEAN ORIGIN.
THEY HAVE HAD IN THE PAST ASSOCIATIONS WITH THE

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C O N F I D E N T I A L SECTION 2 OF 2 BEIRUT 4009

LIMDIS

SOVIET UNION AND COULD READILY ACCEPT THE BASIC
TENETS OF THE SOVIET UNION IN SEEKING LONG TERM
SECURITY FOR THEIR COUNTRY. (COMMENT: THIS IS THE
FIRST TIME I HAVE HEARD TAQLA MENTION SUCH AN
EVENTUALITY.)

7. THE SENATOR POINTED OUT THAT HE WOULD BE VISITING
ISRAEL BEFORE RETURNING TO WASHINGTON AND ASKED
TAQLA IF THERE WERE ANY POINTS THAT TAQLA WOULD

LIKE HIM TO RAISE WITH THE ISRAELI LEADERSHIP.
TAQLA SAID INDEED THERE WAS ONE EXTREMELY IMPORTANT
POINT THAT HE WOULD REQUEST THE SENATOR RAISE
AND THAT WAS THE QUESTION OF ISRAELI REPRISALS AGAINST
WHAT TAQLA DESCRIBED AS PLO TERRORISM. TAQLA READILY
ADMITTED THAT IT WAS IMPOSSIBLE FOR THE TINY LEBANESE
MILITARY ESTABLISHMENT TO CONTROL THE LEBANESE-ISRAELI
FRONTIER. HE COMPARED THE LEBANESE ARMY WITH THAT OF
ISRAEL, POINTING OUT THAT THE LATTER WITH ALL ITS
MODERN WEAPONRY AND TECHNIQUES COULD NOT ENSURE THE
INTEGRITY OF THE BORDER, SO HOW COULD YOU EXPECT THE
LEBANESE ARMY TO DO SO? TAQLA DOES NOT ANTICIPATE
LEBANESE SUCCESS IN CURTAILING PLO TERRORISTS. HE
POINTED OUT THERE WERE RADICAL ELEMENTS
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AMONG THE PALESTINIANS, WHO, NOTWITHSTANDING
EVERYTHING THAT COULD BE DONE, WILL CONTINUE THEIR
SUICIDE RAIDS INTO ISRAEL. HE THEREFORE FEARS
CONTINUED ISRAELI REPRISALS AND BEGGED THE SENATOR
TO POINT OUT TO THE ISRAELI LEADERSHIP THREE CON-
SEQUENCES OF SUCH ACTION. THE FIRST IS THAT WITH
ISRAELI REPRISALS WHICH INEVITABLY WILL ENTAIL
CASUALTIES AMONG LEBANESE CITIZENS, THE LEBANESE
ARMED FORCES WILL BE TEMPTED TO MAKE COMMON CAUSE
WITH THE PALESTINIAN RADICALS. SECONDLY, ALTHOUGH
THE LEBANON TODAY HAS A MODERATE, DEMOCRATIC GOVERNMENT,
BASICALLY PRO-WESTERN, THESE VIEWS ARE NOT SHARED BY
ALL ELEMENTS IN THE LEBANON AND ONE MUST RECOGNIZE
THERE ARE ELEMENTS IN THE LEBANON TODAY WHO, WHILE
SMALL IN NUMBER, ARE NEVERTHELESS SEEKING
TO CHANGE THE ORIENTATION OF THE GOL. CONTINUED
ISRAELI REPRISALS WILL RESULT IN STRENGTHENING
THESE EXTREMISTS AND HELP THEM IN DEVELOPING
COOPERATION WITH THE RADICAL PALESTINIANS.
FINALLY, IF THE ISRAELI REPRISALS CONTINUE
TO SPIRAL, THE CURRENTLY MODERATE LEBANESE GOVERNMENT
WILL BE FACED BY CONTINUED ARAB PRESSURE, FREQUENTLY
FROM THE MORE RADICAL ARAB STATES, TO PLACE ARAB
MILITARY PERSONNEL IN LEBANON AND TO FORCE UPON
THE LEBANESE MILITARY ESTABLISHMENT SOPHISTICATED
WEAPONRY. TAQLA REVIEWED THE THE LEBANESE SUCCESS IN
THE ARAB LEAGUE DEFENSE MINISTERS MEETING IN CAIRO
SIX WEEKS AGO IN REJECTING ARAB TROOPS
AND IN LIMITING THE HARDWARE IT WOULD ACCEPT TO CONVENTIONAL
RELATIVELY UNSOPHISTICATED DEFENSIVE WEAPONRY. THIS
POSITION IS UNANIMOUSLY SUPPORTED BY THE CURRENT
LEBANESE LEADERSHIP BUT IF THE ISRAELI REPRISALS
CONTINUE TO SPIRAL, THOSE MODERATE ELEMENTS IN THE
LEBANON WOULD BE UNDER TREMENDOUS PRESSURE, BOTH

INTERNAL AND EXTERNAL, TO ACCEPT INCREASED ARAB MILITARY ASSISTANCE, EITHER IN PERSONNEL OR EQUIPMENT.

8. SENATOR MCGOVERN ASKED THE FOREIGN MINISTER IF HE BELIEVED THE CURRENT SITUATION IN SOUTHEAST ASIA AND OTHER PROBLEMS FACED BY OUR GOVERNMENT HAD A BEARING ON THE INABILITY OF SECRETARY KISSINGER
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TO ACHIEVE ANOTHER STEP TOWARD A MIDDLE EASTERN SOLUTION. TAQLA BEGAN BY SAYING HE FULLY UNDERSTOOD THE THRST OF THE SENATOR'S QUESTION AND WAS PERSONALLY CONVINCED THAT AMONG THE ARABS THERE WAS NO REACTION TO THESE INTERNAL-EXTERNAL AMERICAN PROBLEMS. HE SAID, HOWEVER, THAT HE WAS EQUALLY CONVINCED THAT SUCH COULD NOT BE SAID OF ISRAEL, WHOSE ACCEPTANCE OF WHAT IT CONSIDERS TO BE MAJOR CONCESSIONS ON ITS PART WOULD BE BASED ON ITS EVALUATION OF THE AMERICAN GUARANTEE. TAQLA BELIEVES THAT THE ISRAELIS NO LONGER ATTACH THE SAME VALUE TO THE AMERICAN GUARANTEE THAT THEY DID PRIOR TO THE EMERGENCE OF THESE AMERICAN INTERNAL PROBLEMS.

9. IN RESPONSE TO A QUESTION FROM THE SENATOR, TAQLA BESPOKE FOR U.S. CONTACT WITH PLO LEADERSHIP SOONEST ALONG LINES ALREADY FAMILIAR TO DEPARTMENT - SUPPORT FOR MODERATES, ETC.
GODLEY

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